

Operator Certification

for Drinking Water and Wastewater Professionals

January 2004

Operator Certification is moving to a new agency

■ What will change?

Operators will go to the Idaho Bureau of Occupational Licenses (IBOL) to get licenses instead of getting certificates from the Idaho Water and Wastewater Operator Certification Board (IWWOCB). More under "This Winter," page 2.

■ Why do we need this change?

The IWWOCB recently closed their offices and stopped issuing certificates. The IBOL will continue the process without a break in service. See details under "Current certificates are still valid," page 2. Also, the cost of a license was going to increase. The fee for renewals, for example, was expected to quadruple with the IWWOCB. The IBOL administers licensing for a lower cost than any other agency we know of. Renewal fees, for example, will not even double. For more information, see "History of fees," page 3.

■ When?

Immediately. IBOL will contact operators in mid-January 2004 about how to renew current certificates. Requirements are discussed in this publication, pages 2-5.

With this publication DEQ is reaching out to systems with information about their licensed operator obligations. DEQ will continue to provide assistance to systems during this transition. See the list of DEQ regional offices on page 6.

Later this year there will be legislation to make this temporary change into a permanent professional change. See details under "In the Future," page 2. ■

March 1, 2004 Renewals

Do not send in renewals until you have information from IBOL. IBOL will send invoices and renewal notices this month.

- **The fee will be different.**
- **The address to send your fee and proof of CEUs will be different.**

See details in this publication.

Review of Operator Certification History

- **September 1998 - December 2003**
DEQ contracted with the IWWOCB to issue operator certificates.
- **April 2002**
All affected drinking water operators had to be certified.
- **April 2003**
New certification rules for wastewater operators took effect, changing from a 1-year to 2-year training (CEU) cycle.
- **Fall 2003**
IWWOCB office closed, DEQ transferred certification task to IBOL.
- **January 2004**
IBOL will begin providing services during the transition; DEQ has Acting CEU Director during the transition.
- **Winter 2004**
Legislation will be introduced to permanently make IBOL the licensing agency.

- Fees page 3
- CEUs page 3
- Certificate due to expire? page 4
- 2004 Exam dates page 4

Agency Letters of Support

DEQ

DEQ will introduce legislation in the 2004 Legislative Session to transfer licensing authority from the Department of Environmental Quality to a new Governor-appointed Board of Drinking Water and Wastewater Professionals. The new board, in turn, will contract with the Idaho Bureau of Occupational Licenses (IBOL) to provide operator certification services to Idaho's drinking water and wastewater professionals.

This is an excellent opportunity for Idaho to control costs and improve the licensing process for drinking water and wastewater professionals. Good government demands that we focus on our core mission of protecting the environment and public health. DEQ will continue to provide training and technical assistance to drinking water and wastewater facilities. The new licensing board will protect public health by ensuring that operators are qualified and licensed.

Due to economies of scale available to the Idaho Bureau of Occupational Licenses, the new licensing board will be able to control costs. The Bureau will be able to provide licensing services at half of the cost of what was being proposed by the former certification board.

Please join us in supporting this important piece of legislation.

C. Stephen Allred, Director
Department of Environmental Quality

IBOL

In the spirit of cooperation between state agencies and following the request of Governor Kempthorne to implement recommendations of the Blue Ribbon Committee, the Idaho Bureau of Occupational Licenses (IBOL) is pleased to offer assistance to the Department of Environmental Quality and is in support of the proposal from DEQ to transfer the licensing authority for Drinking Water and Wastewater Professional licensees.

The IBOL stands prepared to continue the licensing process without a break in services to these licensees.

This challenge and opportunity is welcomed by IBOL to support these professionals in their efforts to protect the environment and public health through decreased costs and an improved licensing process.

Rayola Jacobsen, Bureau Chief
Idaho Bureau of Occupational Licenses

Current certificates are still valid

- Each operator with an expiring certificate will get an invoice (*renewal notice*) from IBOL in January. If that address of record is not current, the operator may not get the invoice. If an operator is not contacted in January, he or she should contact IBOL in February.
- This publication contains details of how to renew and how to apply for a new license certificate. See page 4.
- The Acting CEU Director at DEQ is reviewing and approving courses, instructors, and CEUs. See page 3.
- Reciprocity and Application Reviews are being received by DEQ, addressed to: DEQ, Fiscal Office, 1410 N. Hilton, Boise, ID 83706. Submittals containing payment should go to the Fiscal Office.

This Winter

Legislation will be introduced in 2004 to permanently give authority for licensing to a new Governor-appointed Board of the Drinking Water and Wastewater Professionals, and to make IBOL the agency that issues licenses (certificates).

In the Future

If the legislation is approved, the Governor will appoint members to the Board of the Drinking Water and Wastewater Professionals. As envisioned, this board would have five industry representatives, one DEQ representative, and one person representing the general public.

- The board would direct IBOL to administer tests, issue licenses, maintain related records, and perform any other tasks necessary for a professional licensing program.
- Operators would work directly with IBOL for all tests, fee payments, license issuing, information, and related matters.

History of fees for water and wastewater operators

Although the state has provided funding for this program, licensees also have paid fees, which have gone up over the last two decades.

Review of Renewal Fees

Pre-1986	1986	1990	1994
\$6	\$15	\$20	\$30

If renewal fees continued according to this trend, the fee would be about \$55 now.

What's happening now with funding and fees?

The program will become self-supporting, with no further subsidy from the state, which will ease the burden on state revenue. This underwriting is ending at the same time the licensing program is changing. The state is doing all it can to minimize the fee increase.

The Idaho Bureau of Occupational Licenses is the best entity to provide the most professional licensing services at the lowest cost. IBOL has shown that it can do this for about half the previously proposed cost.

Fees cover the cost of issuing licenses and related work including investigating complaints, answering questions, and working with the legislature.

Q. What do I get for my money?

A. 1) A professional license issued by the IBOL, under the authority of the Board of Drinking Water and Wastewater Professionals, and 2) Advocacy for your profession.

Q. Who sets the fees?

A. If this change goes as planned, fees will be set by the Board of Drinking Water and Wastewater Professionals, which will establish the minimum fees needed to run the licensing program.

Q. How much will the fees be?

A. Fees cannot be set until the Board of Drinking Water and Wastewater Professionals is created, but currently we expect the license renewal fee to be about \$55, with other fees as low as feasible.

Continuing Education Units

During the transition from the IW/WOCB staff to the IBOL, the Acting CEU Director is located at DEQ. During this time, you can expect the following:

No changes in:

- CEUs required for renewal. See page 4 for more information on renewal requirements.
- Criteria for approval of instructors and classes, and number/type of CEUs per class.
- Criteria for relevancy – it is still an *operator's responsibility* to make sure CEUs are approved.
- Status of currently approved courses and instructors.

Changes in:

- **Forms** for approval of classes and instructors and number/type of CEUs per class. There are new forms in the "Application Packet," available from the website, www.idahocertificationtraining.com, or from the Acting CEU Director, (see below).
- **Guidelines** finalized in November 2003, available from the website, www.idahocertificationtraining.com, or from the Acting CEU Director, (see below).
- **CEU Administration**

Rebecca Goehring, Acting CEU Director
Operator Certification Programs
1410 N. Hilton, Boise ID 83706
rgoehrin@deq.state.id.us
208-373-0281 / fax 208-373-0143
(Mike Duehlmeier, former CEU Director, will serve as Technical Advisor.)

What's happening with CEUs right now?

Q. How do I know if a course is approved?

A. Ask the trainer who is offering the training. If the course was approved recently, it will have an approval letter from the Acting CEU Director. If not approved, contact the Acting CEU Director, who may be able to find out if it was previously approved.

Q. How do I get an instructor/class approved?

A. Using the new forms from the Application Packet. Submit completed Application Packets at least 30 days in advance to the Acting CEU Director. Allow as much time as possible, 30 days is a minimum, and it may benefit you to allow more time, especially if an instructor or class is not approved and you have to make changes.

Q. Where can I get an Application Packet?

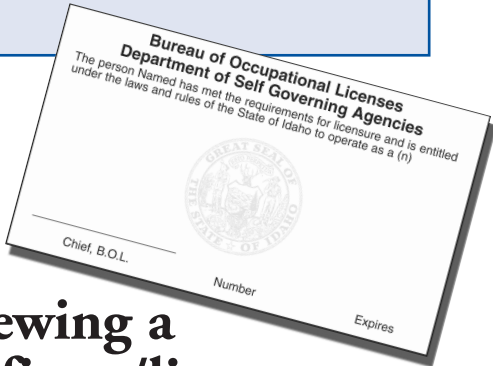
A. At the website, www.idahocertificationtraining.com, or from the Acting CEU Director, see above.

Q. Where do I submit Application Packets?

A. To the Acting CEU Director, Rebecca Goehring, at the above address.

Certificate = License

- ✓ Certificates will now be called licenses.
- ✓ All current certificates will become licenses when they are renewed.
- ✓ Remember, certificate = license.



Renewing a certificate/license

For most operators, renewing a certificate means sending in **the renewal fee and proof of completing the required number of CEUs** – 0.6 CEUs for the 2003 year (ending February 29, 2004) in most cases. The process of renewing certificates has not changed.

During this transition, the big question is, “where do I send my renewal fee and paperwork?” The state will contact certified operators this month (January 2004), using the address currently on file for each operator, with information on where to send renewal fees and paperwork. **Note:** Any operator who has not been contacted by mid-February should contact IBOL.

What else do I need to know? That depends on what type of certificate(s) you want to renew. Requirements are different depending on when your certificate was issued. Detailed requirements are available on the website www.idahocertification-training.com, or by contacting the Brown Environmental Help Desk, 1-800-543-4358 or 208-465-5725, or the nearest DEQ regional office (see page 6).

Getting a new license

To become licensed for the first time, an operator must have proof that his or her employment, education, and experience meet the requirements and must pass an exam. Licensure is a three step process.

1. **Find out the classification of the operator’s system to determine what type/level of license the operator needs.** For system classification information, see page 5 for drinking water or for wastewater.
2. **Submit a new license application** showing the operator’s employment, education, and experience. The education and experience requirements are different for each class, and they are listed at this website: www.idahocertification-training.com. The requirements are also in the rules: IDAPA 58.01.08.556 for drinking water and IDAPA 58.01.02.406-407 for wastewater.
3. **If the application is approved** (meaning the employment, education, and experience are also approved), **take the exam.** If the operator is approved and passes the exam, he or she will get a license.

The license application is at www.idahocertification-training.com, or you can get a printed copy from the Brown Environmental Help Desk, 1-800-543-4358 or 208-465-5725 or the nearest DEQ regional office (see page 6).

2004 License Exam Dates

Application Deadline

Exam Date

February 27, 2004
(for April exam)

April 28, 2004

August 27, 2004
(for October exam)

October 27, 2004

How to determine which license is needed

A responsible charge operator needs a license (certificate) that matches their system's certification class. Here is help in determining your system's certification class.

Drinking Water Operators	Wastewater Operators
<p>1. Does your system treat the water?</p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-bottom: 20px;"> <div style="background-color: #555; color: white; padding: 10px; margin-right: 10px;">YES</div> <div style="background-color: #555; color: white; padding: 10px; margin-right: 10px;">NO</div> <div style="font-size: 24px; margin: 0 10px;">➔</div> <div>Distribution System</div> </div> <div style="text-align: center; margin-bottom: 20px;"> <div style="background-color: #0070c0; width: 30px; height: 30px; margin: 0 auto; transform: rotate(90deg);"></div> </div> <p>Is groundwater the only source and is disinfection the only treatment?</p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-bottom: 20px;"> <div style="background-color: #555; color: white; padding: 10px; margin-right: 10px;">YES</div> <div style="background-color: #555; color: white; padding: 10px; margin-right: 10px;">NO</div> <div style="font-size: 24px; margin: 0 10px;">➔</div> <div>Water Treatment System</div> </div> <div style="text-align: center; margin-bottom: 20px;"> <div style="background-color: #0070c0; width: 30px; height: 30px; margin: 0 auto; transform: rotate(90deg);"></div> </div> <p>Distribution System</p> <p>2. What is your system's certification class?</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; margin-top: 20px;"> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p>Distribution System: <i>(determined by population size)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very small 500 or less Distribution Class I 501 - 1,500 Distribution Class II 1,501 - 15,000 Distribution Class III 15,001 - 50,000 Distribution Class IV 50,001 or more </div> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p>Water Treatment System: <i>(determined by size and complexity see worksheets*)</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Water Treatment System I Water Treatment System II Water Treatment System III Water Treatment System IV </div> </div>	<p>1. Does your system treat the wastewater?</p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center; margin-bottom: 20px;"> <div style="background-color: #555; color: white; padding: 10px; margin-right: 10px;">YES</div> <div style="background-color: #555; color: white; padding: 10px; margin-right: 10px;">NO</div> <div style="font-size: 24px; margin: 0 10px;">➔</div> <div>Collection System</div> </div> <div style="text-align: center; margin-bottom: 20px;"> <div style="background-color: #0070c0; width: 30px; height: 30px; margin: 0 auto; transform: rotate(90deg);"></div> </div> <p>Wastewater Treatment System</p> <p>2. What is your system's certification class?</p> <p>Both Collection and Wastewater Treatment systems certification classes are determined by size <i>and</i> complexity. Therefore, determine your system's certification class by using the worksheets.*</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; margin-top: 20px;"> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p>Collection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Class I Collection Class II Collection Class III Collection Class IV Collection </div> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p>Wastewater Treatment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lagoon Class I Treatment Class II Treatment Class III Treatment Class IV Treatment Wastewater Laboratory Analyst </div> </div> <hr style="width: 50%; margin-left: auto; margin-right: 0;"/> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: flex-end; margin-top: 10px;"> <div style="text-align: right;"> <p>• Wastewater Land Application Operator <i>(future position)</i></p> </div> </div> <p style="margin-top: 20px;"><i>In the future, some operators may be "grandparented," for more information see the contacts listed below.</i></p>

*Worksheets are online: <http://www.idahocertificationtraining.com/forms.htm>
or call the Brown Environmental Help Desk, 1-800-543-4358 or 208-465-5725
or call the nearest DEQ regional office, see page 6.

Department of Environmental Quality Regional Offices

Coeur d'Alene Regional Office

2110 Ironwood Parkway
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814
(208) 769-1422

Lewiston Regional Office

1118 F Street
Lewiston, ID 83501
(208) 799-4370

Boise Regional Office

1445 North Orchard
Boise, ID 83706-2239
(208) 373-0550

Twin Falls Regional Office

601 Pole Line Road, Suite 2
Twin Falls, ID 83301
(208) 736-2190

Pocatello Regional Office

444 Hospital Way, #300
Pocatello, ID 83201
(208) 236-6160

Idaho Falls Regional Office

900 N. Skyline, Suite B
Idaho Falls, ID 83402
(208) 528-2650

